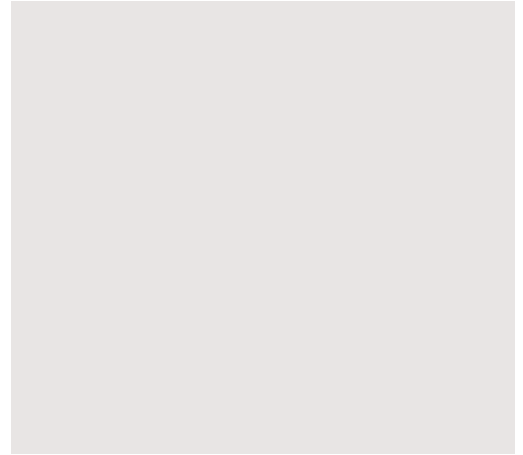
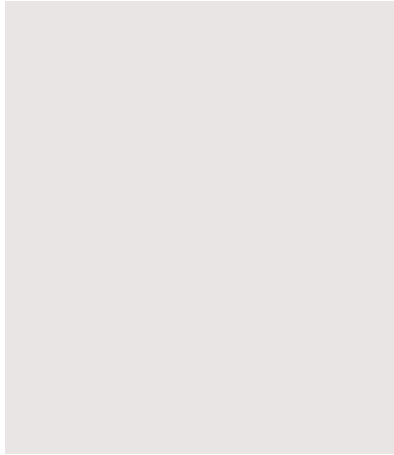
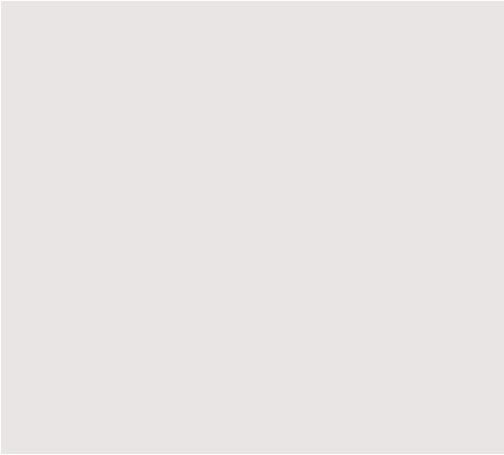


Santan Character Area Update



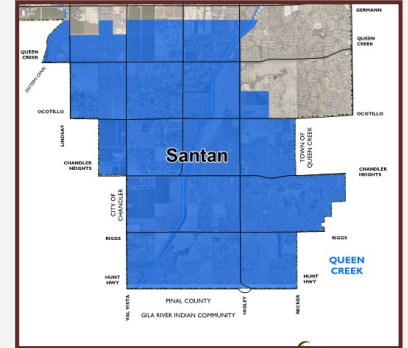
Introduction

Santan Community Character

In 1998, the Santan Character Area (SCA) was created to capture the unique qualities of this growing area because it had recently been incorporated into Gilbert's planning boundary. The SCA encompasses 10,309 (TOG GIS) acres.

The character area serves as a tool to recognize the importance of the rural agricultural heritage of south Gilbert. *Over time, the once predominantly agricultural area has seen the growth of master planned communities, the development of 84 miles of new collector and arterial roads, 20 traffic signals and over 100 new businesses and restaurants.*

Service oriented infill development is just beginning to respond to the SCA population growth. Several schools, churches and residential rooftops are now dominant in the area. There is still significant interest from the development community to continue residential construction in the SCA.



VISION

The people of the Santan Character Area envision their future area as a quiet, rural community of families that can enjoy the natural environment and support preservation of wildlife, agriculture and domestic animals. Emphasis is placed on outdoor living enjoyment and the ability for people to live and play in a secure and safe environment.

Through a citizen-driven plan, low density residential development has been blended with agriculture, equestrian trails, open space and limited commercial support uses to make-up the character of the Santan area.

Multi-use trails, desert washes and proximity to the Santan Mountains make the area unique. The SCA continues to require special attention due to the land use issues related to residential and non-residential development. Residents have expressed concern about the lack of services and commercial amenities, yet desire a pattern of development consistent with the rural lifestyle and open spaces that characterize the Santan area.

As an element of Gilbert's General Plan, the SCA contains goals and policies to guide future development. It is used by the Town Council, Planning Commission and the public as a long range planning tool to evaluate new designs, policy changes and land use and budget decisions.



⑤ Characteristics

Using the community's feedback from the neighborhood meetings and historical research, five (5) characteristics for the Santan area were developed to help provide a framework for the SCA's goals and objectives.



Celebrate Heritage



Sense of Place



**Connect People
and Places**



Leisure and Culture



Open for Business

Celebrate Heritage

We value our Sonoran and rural agricultural roots.

Connect People and Places

We value our ability to connect with roads, trails, bike lanes and pedestrian paths in a safe and efficient manner.

Open for Business

We value our strong entrepreneurial spirit of small business and rural farming supported by nodes of commercial support services.

Sense of Place

We value our Santan Character Area as a great place to grow-up, raise a family and retire comfortably in a safe and attractive environment.

Leisure and Culture

We value our community as a quiet healthy lifestyle with a wide variety of leisure and cultural opportunities that enhance daily life.

Goals and Policies

Celebrate Heritage

GOAL: To protect our Sonoran and agricultural roots.

POLICIES:

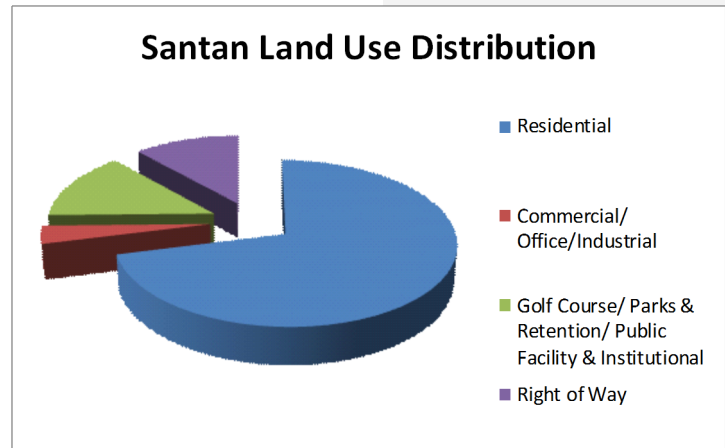
- 1) Preserve existing desert landscape as appropriate and re-vegetate areas that have been disturbed.
- 2) Use large-lot residential areas that integrate with the agricultural character as relief from more intense suburban development.
- 3) Encourage the development of unique, low-density projects mixed with open space or agriculture.
- 4) Promote the use of agricultural themes within the buffer area for residential and commercial development.
- 5) Design aesthetically pleasing, rural-themed streetscapes.
- 6) Encourage a variety of walls including view walls, landscaping and agricultural themed fencing, where appropriate.
- 7) Consider the unique aspects of this Character Area when selecting sites for commercial development.
- 8) Encourage development of agribusiness to support existing agricultural uses.
- 9) Support residential development that allows agricultural uses and activities.
- 10) Promote new development that is compatible with noncommercial or small scale agriculture.
- 11) Support existing agricultural uses

Connect People and Places

GOAL: To continue expanding our network to provide residents the ability to connect with roads, trails, bike lanes and pedestrian paths in a safe and efficient manner.

POLICIES:

- 1) Connect developments with a rural greenbelt buffer that includes multi-use trails.
- 2) Encourage subdivision design to optimize open space areas for community gatherings
- 3) Provide alternative modes of transportation (pedestrian, equestrian, and non-motorized vehicles) along the trail system throughout the Santan area.
- 4) Promote a multi-use trail connection from the Santan Area to the Santan Regional Park.
- 5) Encourage development with residential streets designed to avoid heavy traffic and promote the creation of a collector street system.
- 6) Utilize canals, desert washes and roadway buffer areas as part of the trail system.



Open for Business

GOAL: To encourage a strong entrepreneurial spirit of small business and rural farming supported by nodes of commercial support services.

POLICIES:

- 1) Encourage development of commercial centers adjacent to open space, trails and parks.
- 2) Encourage master planned communities to create village centers.
- 3) Promote the inclusion of neighborhood commercial to provide convenient services to residents.
- 4) Encourage the integration of the canals and water into large projects.
- 5) Encourage regional commercial and entertainment in appropriate locations.
- 6) Locate commercial centers with access to arterials.
- 7) Buffer adjacent land uses with local streets, landscaping and higher density developments.
- 8) Provide substantial buffering between different land uses and densities.

Sense of Place

GOAL: To promote the community as a great place to grow-up, raise a family, and retire comfortably in a safe and attractive environment.

POLICIES:

- 1) Preserve and enhance the scenic beauty and natural desert in open space and public areas.
- 2) Encourage the preservation of the view corridors to the Santan Mountains in all areas of the SCA by promoting development patterns that protect the scenic qualities.
- 3) Preserve wildlife ecosystems and sensitive habitat areas.
- 4) Encourage minimal nighttime lighting to maintain dark skies.
- 5) Maintain and preserve existing low density and rural residential neighborhoods.
- 6) Encourage new development to buffer non-residential uses with open space areas or other appropriate transitional uses.

Leisure and Culture

GOAL: To enhance the quiet and healthy lifestyle enjoyed by residents in the SCA, by offering a wide variety of leisure and cultural opportunities.

POLICIES:

- 1) Continue development of the trail system as illustrated on the Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Plan map.
- 2) Adapt canals, irrigation laterals, washes and floodways for parks, recreation areas and trails.
- 3) Support and coordinate Intergovernmental Agreements with other entities where possible to encourage regional parks and trail systems.
- 4) Connect development to access trails that provide links to equestrian and hiking areas.
- 5) Private parks and open spaces should be designed to have access to trails and canals where possible.
- 6) Blend uses that facilitate water recharge and natural systems with recreational trails and passive activities.

Existing Conditions

Community History

The history of the Santan Character Area is strongly rooted in farming and the dairy industry. At one time there were over 8 dairies in the SCA area. Today there are three dairies. The agricultural acres have diminished from 6,385 acres to less than 1,800 acres of active cultivation. *Of the 10,309 (TOG GIS) acres within the SCA, there is less than 3,138 (TOG GIS) acres of undeveloped vacant land remaining.* Many residents in the SCA area remember the open irrigation canals, huge fields, wildlife and crop dusters fondly. The culture of the area was live and let live. Though neighbors were often spread apart, they all knew each other and came to each other's aid in times of crisis. The SCA was a place where children walked on farm roads to visit friends, residents rode horses along canals and the opening day of dove season was an event. The SCA was a family oriented environment with the community at large keeping watch over the land and each other.

Sense of Place

Urban Design

The architecture and urban form within the SCA was predominantly mid-20th century ranch houses on large plots of land. The dirt farm roads served as fields and homestead access. As time progressed, lot splits, minor land divisions and rural subdivision of one, two and five acre farm lots in small neighborhoods occurred. Most of the lots still embraced farm animals and pastures even as the homes grew larger and more elaborate. Some of these neighborhoods grew to be larger neighborhoods such as the rural residential area between Val Vista Drive and Greenfield Road, from Queen Creek Road to Chandler Heights Boulevard. The density of rural neighborhoods is approximately 1.8 (TOG GIS) and is almost completely built-out barring additional lot splits and the completion of commercial corners at the major intersections. *Rural residential lands > 0 – 2 dwelling units per acre equal approximately 14.16% (TOG GIS) of land use within the SCA.*

In the late 1990s, the custom homes constructed on the farm lots became larger and more elaborated with improved roads and utilities. As the construction boom continued, larger master plan subdivision began



Santan Character Area Population

1995	000,000 (est)
2000	
2005	
2010	
2015 (est)	

developing within the SCA. The master planned communities tended to have smaller lots in the 6,000 sf to 10,000 sf range with an average density of > 2-5 dwelling units per acre. The new homes displayed contemporary design with touches of architectural styles reminiscent of Italian, Spanish, Mission, Craftsman and Prairie. The roads were paved with curb, gutter and were often curvilinear and punctuated with cul-de-sacs. The major master planned communities and subdivisions (Layton Lakes, Freeman Farms, Shamrock Estates, Seville) equal approximately 2,437 acres within the SCA. The SCA is now an area full of urban amenities that also embraces it's historical past.

Jobs and Services

The SCA is predominantly residential with a commercial and employment growth planned for designated areas to serve the existing and future populations. The existing commercial and employment land uses are primarily constructed adjacent to large mature master planned communities such as Seville, Shamrock Estates and adjacent to Power/Coronado Ranch. The vernacular of the non-residential development is consistent with the style of adjacent master planned community or the SCA's rural heritage.

Vacant land designated for commercial and employment land uses is available at Higley and Riggs Roads, Val Vista Drive and Riggs Road, Greenfield and Ocotillo Roads, Greenfield and Queen Creek Roads, Val Vista Drive and Chandler Heights Road Val Vista Drive and Queen Creek Road and Lindsay and Queen Creek Roads. Some of these areas are adjacent to master planned developments that are still under constructions or have lower population density. Other lands are adjacent to large lot development or vacant lands yet to be annexed or develop.

Connectivity

Access is a key determinant of growth because it facilitates the flow of goods and people. The SCA is well connected with close proximity to the Santan Freeway, railroad, airports, bike paths and trail systems.

Roads

The mile grid system exists throughout the character area and overtime County farm roads have been annexed and improved to meet Town standards as part of Capital Improvement Projects or as part of new subdivision development. However, new subdivision development has not always been contiguous, causing scalloped street streets, unimproved

Rural residential
lands > 0 – 2 dwelling
units per acre equal
approximately 14.16%
(TOG GIS) of land use



intersections and points of congestion. Traffic volumes and safety concerns have required that some of the Capital Improvement Projects in the Santan Area be moved forward more quickly than originally planned, to alleviate the congestion on the roads most impacted by existing development and pass through traffic. Pass-through traffic has been and continues to be a concern in the south Gilbert area. Adjacent municipalities that do not have freeway access pass through South Gilbert to access the 202 Freeway at Greenfield Road/Santan Boulevard and Val Vista Drive. From those two points, all roads south and east have heavy congestion throughout the day. Other traffic travel through the SCA to the Santan Mall and other larger power centers in central Gilbert.

Bike Paths and Trails

As the roads develop in the SCA, bike lanes on arterial and collector streets have been constructed. These bike lanes connect into the Town's road networks. The Town has actively worked to require, construct and/or retrofit roads to accommodate bike lanes. The bike lanes connect to bike paths along canal, power corridors and washes. The Town continues to work toward developing the bike path and trail network in the SCA. The recent Queen Creek Wash improvements included a multi-use trail that connects into the Queen Creek trail system. The upcoming Sonoqui Wash project will also include multi-use trails and paths that will link into the Queen Creek Wash. Both of these improvements currently terminate at the East Maricopa Flood Way just inside of the SCA eastern boundary. Chapter ___ of the General Plan and Exhibit ___ show that it is intended that these paths and trails continue along the wash and connect to other trails in Seville, Brooks Farm Road, the Hunt Highway, the Queen Creek Road power lines and Greenfield Road from Queen Creek Road up to the Hetchler Soccer Complex.

Railroad

Many residents reminisce about the sound of the train. The Union Pacific Rail Road runs southeast to northwest through the Town just north of the SCA. The railroad noise and vibration have little to no impact on the south Gilbert community. The rail service does provide opportunity for employment and transit connections within a 10–15 minute drive north from the SCA.

Airports

There are two airports within 10-20 minutes of the SCA. The Chandler Municipal airport is located to the northwest . It is owned by the City of Chandler and is considered a business oriented airport surrounded by charter, excursion and training institutions. The airport chartered 200,000 operations in 2014. A larger airport to the northeast is the Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport. The airport is owned and operated by the Phoenix-Mesa Airport Authority and is a reliever airport of Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. The authority is governed by the Town of Gilbert, City of Mesa, Town of Queen Creek, Gila River Indian Community, City of Phoenix and City of Apache Junction. This general aviation airport had over 700,000 enplanements in 2014 and is expected to reach 850,000 by 2017.

Infrastructure and Amenities

The Backbone — Water and Sewer

Infrastructure improvements within the SCA have primarily occurred with new master planned development. Due to the location of the South Area Waste Water Treatment Facility reclaimed water lines are available on most of the major arterial roads within the SCA. Water lines are generally available with private wells being incorporated into the Town system as development occurs. Water service continues to be improved as new development adds loops into the system that help to maintain pressure. Some large lots retain their private wells and water rights. In addition, a majority of the large lots have flood irrigation provided by private companies. The flood irrigation is delivered in private lines to each lot via a manually operated valve system.

Sewer is provided through most of the major public roads in the SCA with gaps occurring adjacent to large areas of vacant land or mature large lot areas. Many mature large lots have septic systems that are approved through Maricopa County.

Other utility infrastructure is provided by private or quasi private service providers through franchise agreement with the Town of Gilbert.

Recreation and Leisure

Public parks and open spaces in the SCA have primarily been developed as part of large master planned communities or through public-private



partnership at the Hetchler Soccer Complex located at the far north boundary of the SCA. There are no other existing public parks within the SCA. The South Recharge Facility is not considered a park facility though residents may walk around it and it is often used for bird watching. The East Maricopa Floodway and the surrounding Roosevelt Water Conservation District canal access roads are not open to the public as a trail system at this time. The Town is currently working toward the acquisition of land for a regional park and hopes to bring forth a Capital Improvement Project in the near future.



Community Facilities

The SCA is serviced by the South Area Service Center located at Greenfield and Queen Creek Roads. Currently the service center house a police substation, solid waste transfer facility, hazardous material drop-off and a few other small services. Per the Parks and Recreation 2014 Master Plan, the Service Center will be the future home of a Recreational Center. A public library is located across Queen Creek Road at Perry High School and Basha High School, which is at Val Vista Drive and Riggs Road just outside of the Town of Gilbert and SCA planning boundary.

Environmental

Canals, Flood Channels and Washes

Ground Water and Fissures

Vistas and Landmarks—Santan Mountains

Future Needs

Housing Stock

The residential housing market remains strong within the Town of Gilbert. The building community is actively seeking vacant land on which to construct tract subdivisions creating a seller's market. Some of the dairymen and farmers are open to the sale of their property to developers. Others wish to continue their family business regardless of the market potential. The residents of the SCA accept farming and are used to it. The existing residents have encouraged new communities to buffer future residents that are not used to the agriculture dust, aroma and hours of operation. The community further embraces the agricultural past and

character through fencing, architecture, landscape, trails and open space and expects that new development will also. As the housing market continues to prosper, there is continued pressure to increase density in the SCA. The community has supported the General Plan Land Use Classifications as currently depicted, with changes to the General Plan only supported that decrease density.

Jobs

Most of the employment opportunities within the SCA are related to schools, churches, retail, food service or home occupation. Significant employment opportunities are occurring a few miles to the north along the 202 Santan Freeway at Mercy Gilbert Hospital, the Santan Motorplex, Val Vista Square, SanTan Mall, the Chandler Airpark, ASU Polytechnic and the Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport. The commute to these locations is less than 20 minutes.

Services

In reviewing future needs, retail trade area maps were analyzed for a range of commercial development types. These maps show that while a larger retail “power center” may not be sustained in south Gilbert; there are gaps in smaller retail trade centers needed to serve existing and future neighborhoods. Additionally, other non-residential land uses are necessary to serve the diverse Santan area such as health care facilities, colleges, congregate living facilities, eating and drinking establishments, cultural institutions, etc.

Based on resident input, there remains a significant need for neighborhood services such as restaurants, print shops, salons, automotive repair, day care, medical offices, grocery stores, dry cleaners, fast food, and other uses that support daily life.

Conclusion